

Mushrooms

July 2 is deadline for comments on **Food & Drug Administration's** (FDA) proposal to change the standard of identity of canned mushrooms to permit the addition of organic acids (such as the acid in lemon juice) as an optional ingredient. Purpose of the proposal, which was based on a petition by Mushroom Processors Association, is to prevent the discoloration of mushrooms that are canned in enamel-lined cans. Association said such discoloration caused consumers to suspect the quality of the canned mushrooms & to either throw them away or return them to the stores.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 3, page 18315. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Food & Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Appliance efficiency

June 7 is deadline for comments on **Federal Energy Administration's** (FEA) proposal to implement the Energy Policy & Conservation Act.

FEA is prescribing "energy efficiency improvement targets" for refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes dryers, water heaters, room air conditioners, television sets, washing machines, stoves & home heating equipment (excluding furnaces). "Targets" are proposed industry-wide goals, not meant to apply to any specific model, brand, assembly line or company.

Plans are intended to develop an energy efficiency level for appliances manufactured in 1980 that will exceed the 1972 levels by no less than 20%. Goal is to obtain the highest percentage of energy savings that is economically & technologically possible for all appliances covered by law.

Highlights of the proposal include:

- Plans must be shown to be practicable by 1980 if they are to be considered technologically possible.
- Factors to be considered in determining economic practicality, including negative effects on competition & reduced costs corresponding to energy saved.
- A partial list of potential design changes, which FEA feels will help manufacturers achieve the targets set for 1980.
- Assertion that no environmental impact statement is required. These are voluntary programs & the degree of acceptance is uncertain, making meaningful analysis of the nature & scope of the effects almost impossible.
- Specific questions about covered products manufactured in 1972 & about changes in the product that have been or are now being made.

Comments will be used to evaluate plans & prescribe the final target for each type of appliance.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 14, page 19977. CONSUMER NEWS: April 1. Send comments to Executive Communications, Federal Energy Administration, Box GZ, Washington, DC 20461. Identify comments on outside of envelope & on documents as "Appliances Proposed Energy Efficiency Improvement Targets."

Overdrafts (continued)

June 14 is new deadline for comments on **Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.'s** (FDIC) proposal to permit authorization for automatically transferring funds from a consumer's savings account to his checking account. FDIC wants consumers & others to understand that such transfers would only take place with the depositor's permission. Some commenters have already objected to the penalty provisions of the proposal [CONSUMER NEWS: April 15], but FDIC points out that "the sole purpose [of the penalty provisions] is to maintain the distinction between savings accounts & demand accounts."

Details—*Federal Register*: May 7, page 18872; March 19, page 11563. CONSUMER NEWS: April 15. Send comments to Executive Secretary, Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., Washington, DC 20429.

Mopeds (continued)

June 15 is deadline for **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's** (NHTSA) request for comments on safety aspects of motorized bicycles (Mopeds). CONSUMER REGISTER: Jan. 1 summarized NHTSA's preliminary conclusions about Mopeds—& left the comment period open.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 13, 19750; Nov. 28, 1975, page 55375. Send comments to Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, DC 20590. Refer to Docket No. 75-29.

Discrimination

July 2 is deadline for comments on **Health, Education & Welfare Dept.'s** (HEW) request for ideas on the best ways to resolve complaints of discrimination filed by individual citizens.

HEW had earlier announced that it will try to make sure that all complaints alleging discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in Federally assisted programs are "resolved in a timely manner."

Some of the questions that concern HEW in its effort to treat everyone fairly are:

- How can you pay attention to individual cases & at the same time deal with the astronomical growth in the number of cases that must be considered?
- How can you establish priorities when each individual case potentially has an equal claim on the available resources?

Details—*Federal Register*: May 3, page 18394. Send comments to Director, Office of Civil Rights, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., PO Box 50180, Washington, DC 20004.

Pooled time deposits (continued)

July 9 is new deadline for comments on **Federal Reserve System's** (FRS) proposal to prohibit its member banks from paying a higher rate of interest for large denomination (\$100,000 or more) pooled certificates of deposit (CDs) than they do for deposits of less than \$100,000.

Money market investment companies have been "pooling" the resources of small investors to buy the larger CDs—thereby making it possible for them to get a higher rate of interest than is possible with the smaller denominations. (Interest rates for small denomination CDs are regulated; interest rates for large denomination CDs are not regulated.)

Details—*Federal Register*: May 19, page 20590; March 15, page 10917. CONSUMER REGISTER: April 1. Send comments to Secretary, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC 20551.

Metric education

Office of Education (OE) has published rules on projects to be funded to help schools prepare for conversion to the metric system of measurement.

OE is authorized to award contracts & grants to educational agencies & institutions to encourage the institutions "to prepare students to use the revised metric system of measurement with ease & facility as part of the regular educational program," as provided for in a section of the Education Amendments of 1974.

OE is now screening proposed projects that have been submitted by school districts, state education agencies, colleges &

nonprofit public & private agencies. OE expects to announce awards of grants & contracts later this month.

In considering the proposals, OE is looking for:

- Projects to help consumers adjust to a shift in the units of things they buy & sell. OE places as much emphasis on formal & informal adult education as on programs for children in school.
- Projects that would use metric throughout education, rather than just in specialized courses & materials for crash preparation for the changeover to metric.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 21, page 16766.

Note: Metric Conversion Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-168) specifies that the metric system be included in school curricula & that teachers be trained to teach it.

Smoked meat & poultry

Agriculture Dept. wants to know what "smoked" means to consumers when they see the word on meat & poultry labels. Do they assume that "smoking" results directly from burning wood that gives the finished product a brownish color & a unique aroma & flavor? Or do consumers consider only the brownish color, aroma & flavor, without regard to the process involved?

After Agriculture hears from consumers—by June 29—it plans to issue new regulations for meat & poultry labeled "smoked."

In the past, meat & poultry were smoked by exposing the products to burning wood smoke—and the word "smoked" could appear on the labels. Later, industry developed other methods that produced similar results. They are:

- An artificial liquid smoke flavoring produced chemically that resembles the color, aroma & flavor characteristics of smoke. Products containing artificial liquid smoke must be labeled "Artificial Smoke Flavor Added."
- A natural liquid smoke product prepared by burning wood & trapping & condensing the smoke into a liquid. Liquid is then filtered to remove impurities. Products containing natural liquid smoke must be labeled "Smoke Flavored" or "Smoke Flavoring Added."

There are 2 methods for applying natural liquid smoke to meat & poultry. One method involved spraying or dripping the liquid smoke directly onto a heating element which instantly converts the liquid drops into a gas. Meat & poultry are then exposed to this smoke. Another method involves the use of air pressure & jet nozzles that break liquid smoke into small droplets that are suspended in the air like fog.

Agriculture has tentatively decided that meat & poultry products smoked by the first method could be labeled "smoked," but those smoked by the second method could not—because the term "smoked" carries a connotation that the product had been exposed to smoke in its traditional gaseous state. Now, however, Agriculture says there is a difference of opinion on this interpretation & would like to know which of the following conditions consumers think should be met in order for a product to be called "smoked".

- When a product was exposed directly to the natural smoke produced by burning wood.
- When the product was exposed to natural liquid smoke transformed into a gas by the direct application of heat.
- When the product was exposed to natural liquid smoke transformed into a vapor by mechanical means.

• When a product has natural liquid smoke applied by any means.

■ When artificial smoke is used by any means. Agriculture points out that using natural liquid smoke in any form (1) may reduce pollution from burning wood & (2) may be advantageous from a sanitation standpoint.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 30, page 18120. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20520.

Bockwurst

Agriculture Dept. has amended its bockwurst (a form of sausage) standard to permit the use of meat other than pork in its manufacture. This bockwurst, which must be labeled "Beef Bockwurst" or "Beef & Veal Bockwurst," will serve the needs of consumers who do not eat pork for religious or dietary reasons. Amendment becomes effective May 31.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 30, page 18088.

Meeting

FARM PRODUCTS—Agriculture Dept.'s Advisory Committee on Regulatory Programs will hold its first meetings June 8 & 9, at 9 a.m., in Room 218 Administration Bldg., 14th & Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC. Committee will evaluate Agriculture's programs & review impact of programs on farm income & consumer prices. Public participation will be invited if time permits. For more information, contact Donald E. Wilkinson, USDA-AMS, Washington, DC 20250.

HIGHWAY SAFETY—National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is planning to modernize some of its safety standards—that were written to implement the Highway Safety Act of 1966. Before doing so, it is holding public hearings on the standards that include car inspection & registration, motorcycle safety, driver education, alcohol, school buses & traffic records.

Following are dates & places for the meetings. They will all be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

June 15—Washington, DC—Federal Aviation Administration Auditorium, 800 Independence Ave. SW.

June 22—San Francisco—Room 13450, Federal Bldg., 450 Golden Gate Ave.

June 24—Denver—Post Office Auditorium, 1823 Stout St.

June 29—Atlanta—Room 401, Georgia Dept. of Transportation Bldg., No. 2 Capitol Square.

July 1—Kansas City, MO., Room 140, New Federal Bldg., 601 E. 12th St.

To speak at the meetings, register in advance by writing to Docket Section 76-2, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, DC 20590. Include name & address & date & city of public meeting.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 20, page 20705.

Meeting postponed

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS—National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has postponed indefinitely a meeting on safety of catalytic converters for pollution control. Reason: lack of interest.

This listing, prepared by Marion Q. Ciacchio, is intended only as summary coverage of selected *Federal Register* items deemed of particular interest to consumers, & it does not affect the legal status or effect of any document required or authorized to be published pursuant to Section 5 of Federal Register Act as amended, 44 U.S.C. 1505. *Federal Register* is published Monday through Friday (except Federal Government holidays) by **Office of the Federal Register, National Archives & Records Service, General Services Administration**. Subscription is \$5 a month or \$50 a year & may be ordered from **Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office**, Washington, DC 20402. Superintendent also sells copies of *Federal Register* for 75¢ each. Free copies of *Federal Register* may be available in libraries.

For you

These forms are for you to use, if you wish, in commenting on any Federal Agency proposal summarized in CONSUMER REGISTER. Of course, if you cannot get your comments on the front & back of a form, feel free to continue your comments on additional paper.

Send comment forms to addresses listed in the summaries.

CONSUMER NEWS is publishing these forms in cooperation with **Food & Drug Administration (FDA)**.

Rate Register

Trains

- Beginning June 15, **National Railroad Passenger Corp. (Amtrak)** will increase its coach fares by 5% on most of its trains. Metroliner fares will not be affected, & the only first class fare increase (5%) will be between New York & Philadelphia.

- Also, beginning June 15, **South-eastern Railway System** will increase its coach fares by 5%.

Mail

- General Services Administration (GSA)** has issued guidelines to help Federal agencies reduce mail costs. Included was a suggestion to use commercial small-parcel carriers (such as **United Parcel Service**) as a cheaper alternative to **Postal Service's (PS)** priority mail.

GSA pointed out that before the **Postal Reorganization Act of 1970**, Federal agencies used their own systems for estimating mail costs—and often underestimated the costs. Deficits were covered by Congressional appropriations. When PS was established, Congress expected operating expenses to be offset by revenues. As a result, Federal agencies' postal costs have gone up since PS figured costs more accurately, & postage rates have also gone up.

Planes

- Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)** is asking for comments (by June 18) on a staff task force report listing options for improving air service to small cities. Included is **Transportation Dept.'s (DOT)** proposed amendment to the **Aviation Act of 1975** that would permit CAB to enter into agreements

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Clip this form, fill in blanks, write your comments & mail to agency noted in CONSUMER REGISTER item.

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Rate Register

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with non-certificated commuter airlines to provide air service in communities threatened with loss of service. Proposal would allow subsidies for these airlines. Present laws prohibit CAB from signing subsidy agreements with airlines it does not certificate. Send comments to Docket Section, Civil Aeronautics Board, Washington, DC 20428.

• **Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)** has denied Eastern Airlines' latest request for a 2% domestic air fare increase that, if approved, would have become effective today. CAB said the increase would raise Eastern's profit on investment too far above CAB's 12% guideline.

• **Eastern Airlines & Trans World Airlines** have asked **Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)** to approve an additional 2% increase in domestic air fares to become effective July 1.

• **Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)** has approved Pan American World Airways' request to increase air fares 5 to 13% on routes between the West Coast & New Zealand & Australia. Increases become effective today & will expire April 1, 1977.

Gas

• On May 25 **Federal Power Commission (FPC)** approved the sale of methane gas to be produced synthetically from cow manure [**RATE REGISTER**: Nov. 1, 1975]. Gas will be produced at a plant near Hooker, OK, by **Calorific Recovery Anerobic Process, Inc.** & sold to **Natural Gas Pipeline Co. of America**. Manure is taken from the feed lots, mixed with water & clarified to increase concentration. After going through another process, the result is methane gas, carbon dioxide & traces of nitrous oxide & hydrogen sulfide. Solid waste remaining may be processed to create fertilizer.

Calorific will sell Natural up to 99,000 cubic meters (3.5 million cubic feet) daily, at a price of \$1.33 per 28.3 cubic meters (thousand cubic feet).

